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ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

FEBRUARY, 1853.

WAR—DELUSIONS.

(Continued.)

4. Observe, also, *the suicidal folly of war*. It is seldom so successful as pacific measures, and generally recoils in terrible evils upon its own abettors. Rarely has our government persisted in negotiation for its rights without securing them in the end. It was thus we obtained from France, after some twenty years, an indemnity of twenty-five million francs, and then came near losing it all, and sacrificing a hundred times as much more, by a mere threat, or supposed threat, of war to hasten the payment.* All our equitable claims against Mexico we might have secured by sufficient perseverance in the use of conciliatory measures; and, if we wanted more than our just due, we might have got even that by fair purchase for one-tenth of what that war will ultimately be found to have cost and wasted for ourselves alone.

But Mexico, you say, insults us. Be it so; must we for such a reason fight her to the death? Should a man, as much beneath your notice as Mexico has been said to be beneath ours, insult you, would any Christian or rational code of honor require you to wipe out such disgrace by a mutual agreement between you to try every possible means of blowing out each other's brains? Besides, we heard nothing of these insults till war came, or was threatened; and, if as little known to the rest of the world as to ourselves, they could not have injured our character much. Nobody would ever have thought the less of us on account of those alleged insults; and, had we

*The main facts were these:—France had at length acknowledged the debt, and was on the point of paying it; but President Jackson, growing impatient of delay, recommended, in his annual Message, Dec. 1834, the issuing of Letters of Marque and Reprisals to hasten or insure the payment. This recommendation France took as an insult, and refused to pay until that insult should be recalled or explained. The President's threat of war was the only obstacle that ever existed to the payment of the debt after it was ascertained and admitted to be due. In his next annual Message, the President, though sternly refusing to explain, did in fact make statements equivalent to an explanation, and so satisfactory to France, that now she promptly paid the debt. Yet the impression is very general in this country, that President Jackson's threat of war was the means of getting that indemnity, whereas that threat was the only occasion of difficulty or delay in the payment!

passed them over in generous silence, we should at this hour have stood far better in the world's esteem.

'But we must settle the boundary and other points in dispute between us.' Very true; but how? Like savages and tigers, or like rational, Christian men? Would two farmers, if they had a similar dispute about the boundary between their farms, set their cats and dogs, or their children and workmen to fight about it? Is there any better logic in powder and steel, in bullets and bomb-shells, to decide aright a question of this sort? Could the capture of all the towns in Mexico, or the butchery of half the millions in both these republics, have ever shown how any matter in controversy between us *ought* to have been settled? So of every point in dispute between nations. Fight as long as you please, you must, after all, resort for the final adjustment to the very same expedients that might have been employed before fighting, even better than after it. Thus might the parties to any war settle, by peaceful commissioners, all the points in controversy just as well before a blow is struck, as they can after years of mutual slaughter and exasperation.

'But Mexico would come to no settlement at all; and we must needs *compel* her to *some* terms.' Well, we tried compulsion with her; and it only made the matter worse and worse, until we resorted to conciliation. Every ship of war, instead of conquering a peace, just increased the difficulties in the way of a settlement. Every victory won, every drop of blood shed, every threat of still further vengeance, seemed only to aggravate the hatred and obstinacy of Mexico against us, and unite all her millions from the highest to the lowest in a desperate purpose to perish in the ruins of their common country, rather than listen to any overtures of peace under such circumstances. The capture of her capitol at length showed us how vain it was to *fight* any longer for peace; and, when we resorted in good faith to pacific measures, then, and not till then, did we obtain a settlement. The fighting was utterly useless, all suicidal alike to both parties.

5. *Equally suicidal are the means commonly employed for the prevention of war.* They consist in preparation for the very evil to be prevented; and all history proves, as common sense would suggest, that the theory is wrong. In peace, nations prepare for war — *for* war as an event to be expected, not *against* war as an evil to be avoided; and such preparations must of course tend not to insure peace, but to promote war.*

Thus we reason in every other case. Preparation for any thing just

*Even statesmen are at length beginning to see and acknowledge this. Lord Aberdeen, now the Premier of Great Britain, said some years ago in Parliament, "I am disposed to dissent from the maxim which has been so generally received, 'if you wish for peace, you must be prepared for war;' but the state of society in which we now live, and when the warlike preparations of the great powers are made at an enormous expense, I say that, so far from there being any security for peace, they are directly the contrary, and tend at once to war; and I cannot be at ease as regards the stability of peace, until I see a reduction of the forces of the great military governments of Europe." It is well for England and the world that such a pacific statesman is now at the head of the British government, with Lord John Russell for Foreign Secretary, who said a few years ago, when Premier himself, "If the United States should see fit to propose such a measure as Stipulated Arbitration, the British Government would take it into their most serious consideration."

paves the way for it, and renders its occurrence more easy and certain. Prepare yourself for gambling or forgery; and you will be more likely to gamble or forge. You would not think to prevent duelling in a community by keeping all its members in constant, perfect readiness to fight duels. Prevent theft or murder by preparing to commit such crimes with the greatest success! Multiply grog-shops and brothels, as the best preparations for intemperance and licentiousness, and then make proficiency in these vices universally reputable, the surest passport, like war, to fame and favor, all as the means of doing away those evils! Common sense scouts such logic; and it is the only logic brought to sustain the practice of preparations for war in a time of peace.

The thing speaks for itself; such preparations *must* provoke war. Look at our conflict with Mexico. Had there been in neither party that spirit of war which forms the chief element of preparation, and no army from either republic on the Rio Grande for the very purpose of war, would a collision have been possible? No; the parties fought just because both were ready to fight, and for that very reason wished to fight. Had Mexico had no soldiers in the field, and we no army on her soil, and no fleet in her waters, I see not how there could have been any fighting. Just so in every case. The chief danger of war in Europe arises from her vast and well-nigh perfect preparations for conflict. Such is the inevitable tendency of these preparations; they occasion a hundred wars where they prevent one; and, could the nations of Christendom all be brought to a simultaneous abandonment of such preparations beyond a mere police force for internal purposes, it would do much to insure perpetual peace among them, more, a thousand times over, than their three or four millions of warriors kept ready, at a most enormous expense, for the work of slaughter and devastation.

The case is so clear that we may well wonder why nations do not recognise the principle for which we contend. They do in respect to individuals; but why not apply it to nations? It is just as applicable to them as it is to individuals; but would you arm men in society with pistols and bowie knives as a security against bloodshed? They do so in some parts of our country; and the result is, that bloody rencontres there are almost as frequent as the days of the year. The President's use of our standing army led to the war with Mexico; our Military Academy at West Point has all along been the chief nursery of the army; and the abolition of them both would be a most important step towards insuring to us permanent peace with all the world.*

*We assume, for the basis of this argument, no extreme doctrine of peace; for, admitting the right of war in strict self-defence, and the necessity of reliance on the sword, still there would be no real need of a military academy, a standing army, or militia drills. Were all these abandoned at once, our country, even on the war-principle, would be just as safe as it is now. Self-defence would arm itself in ample season to meet any possible emergency. If the whole power of England, though holding then in her hand the helm of their government, could not subdue her American colonies, when only two or three millions without facilities for making arms and ammunition, would any nation now dream of conquering us when grown to twenty five millions, and possessed of every possible means of preparation to resist an invader?

6. *How delusive. also, the dreams, indulged by many good men, of security against future wars!* We have, in truth, no such security. We once thought we had a great deal, and verily supposed the age, especially our own country, far too enlightened to resort very soon, if ever, to the brutal arbitrament of the sword. Not a few imagined that the war-spirit among us was either exorcised, or held securely in check; that our government could never be goaded into conflict with any nation on earth; that we understood our own interests too well to commit that species of national suicide; that our last war had been waged, our last battle fought, and now there remained little occasion on this subject for alarm or precaution. Sad mistake! for in the midst of a thirty years' general peace through Christendom, our late war with Mexico burst upon us like a thunder-bolt at noon-day in a cloudless sky, and so roused the war-spirit among us, that two or three hundred thousand volunteers responded to the call of our government for only fifty thousand, and the land rang, especially the great valley of the West and South-west, with a wild, fierce outcry for "war now to the knife." One year before, hardly any one would have deemed all this possible. We had been wont to boast of our policy and habits as pre-eminently pacific; but anon, we found ourselves slumbering over a volcano of war-passions ready at any moment to burst forth and deluge the land with its fiery flood. Alas! we have even now no real security whatever; for a people that could, at the first blast of the bugle, thus rush to arms on pretexts confessedly so slight, for objects so trivial or so wicked, may go to war at any call of partizan leaders, at any instigation of their own bad passions. Every patriot has reason to tremble for the consequences. We began in the Mexican war this suicidal game of blood; God only knows where it will end. Look at the Buffalo hunts and Cuban invasions that have since followed. We injected the war-virus into the moral arteries of the nation; and it may yet lead to war after war for ages and even centuries to come. Like the first glass waking the drunkard's dormant appetite into ungovernable rage, or like a few drops of blood licked up by a herd of hungry wolves, and kindling a thirst which sends them through the forest howling fiercely for more blood, so may the taste for war acquired by our people in this contest with Mexico impel them on, like a vessel driven before the tempest, and madly plunging from wave to wave, till the ark of our own liberties, like that of revolutionary France in 1792, or the military republics south of us, may yet go down in a maelstrom of blood to rise no more.

What is to prevent such catastrophes? Fear? *Never will the mere dread of its evils suffice to keep nations from war.* It is very true that these evils *ought* to deter them; but do they in fact? Our rulers must have foreseen, that the late war against Mexico would inevitably occasion a fearful sacrifice of property, life and happiness; but did the certainty of such evils restrain them from plunging into it? "Thank God," exclaimed Louis Phillippe in 1843, at the zenith of his fame and power,

“thank God, war now costs too much; nations can no longer afford it.” All very true; but does this or any of its other evils actually hold them back from the sword? On this point let history speak. We ourselves plunged into a second war with England before we had paid off the debts of the first; Great Britain, even while staggering under a mountain-weight of war-debts, still struggled blindly on through twenty-two years of war with the French revolutionists, at an average cost of more than one million dollars every day; France too, within some twenty years after Napoleon had sacrificed full three millions of her children on the shrine of his mad ambition, was quite ready to rush into a general war on what was termed the Eastern Question or Quintuple Treaty; and all the wars of modern Christendom have arisen in spite of what history tells us of the “thirty years’ war” in the middle of the seventeenth century, which reduced the population of Germany three-fourths, from sixteen millions to four millions; which swept from one duchy more than nine-tenths of its inhabitants, leaving only 48,000 in place of 500,000; which drenched whole countries in blood, made the heart of Europe a wilderness, and sometimes left immense districts, in one case no less than twenty contiguous villages, without either man or beast! Tremendous lessons! How came the world ever to forget them? Why have they proved so unavailing? Mainly because the evils of war are not, as they might and should be, pressed upon the attention of mankind so as to change their wrong modes of thinking and feeling on the subject.

WELLINGTON:

OR THE SUCCESSFUL WARRIOR.

The Bible is fond of sketching the characters and acts of distinguished men, whether they have done good or evil. The purposes of these men, their motives and hearts, and the workings of their thoughts, are opened to us. The Bible makes very much of its best teachings out of the characters of its distinguished, influential, talented men—men who have done something right or wrong for themselves, for the nation, or for God.

This Scripture example may be followed to advantage in drawing the characters of the distinguished men of our own times and knowledge. There are most valuable lessons to be learned from them, which ought not to be lost to the people. We do not often enough attempt this mode of instruction, because it is no easy task to take the departed and very talented man, and draw his life as he lived it, and shew the influences which are flowing from him, and gather up the moral of the whole for general use. But the lessons of practical wisdom, integrity of life, and true godliness to be learned from the course and the end of an eminent man’s life,